

SAN MIGUEL'S NOONDAY GUN

A STORY OF THRILLING ADVENTURE.

By J. L. RODIER.

He was a tall, gaunt fellow, whose Texas sombrero shaded a pair of glittering eyes, and whose massive, clean-shaven face was alternately repulsive and attractive to me as I half furtively watched him while seated in the lobby of a downtown hotel, where I was waiting to meet a friend who was to stop over an hour or two on his way North.

When his eyes were averted I noted that he was not still for the smallest fraction of a second. His large, well-shaped hands, with their long, bony fingers, would be clasped and unclasped incessantly, his feet would shift to and fro without pause, the right leg would be thrown across the left knee for an instant, the position would be reversed, the feet would both be placed on the floor, then one leg thrown over the arm of the huge chair in which he sat, and so on continuously, until I was positively nervous.

With a quick motion he arose and walked to where I was seated, and said, abruptly: "You appear to be waiting for a friend?"

"I am," I replied, laconically.

A philosophic reflection. "And waiting is at best a tedious thing—at its worst it can be an ordeal which will leave an impression on one's mind impossible to eradicate."

His voice was as peculiar as his general appearance—well modulated, but sounding as though he suffered from some affection of the vocal chords. But I had some little time yet to wait, and was not at all averse to listening to philosopher or fool, if he could but entertain me between while; hence I rejoined:

"Is that an abstraction, or the result of experience?"

"It is both for me, but the abstract is swallowed up in the concrete."

"May I make bold to inquire how, sir?" I asked, my curiosity aroused.

"You may," he replied. "And if you have a few moments to spare I will read you a page out of a somewhat eventful life history, in the connection

which may interest you. Truth to tell, sir, I am lonesome, and am dwelling in the past—a dangerous conjunction, sir, a dangerous conjunction," the latter gravely and impressively.

After a moment of silence he leaned slightly forward, half facing me, clasping his hands in front of him, and in a monotone recited rather than addressed to me the following:

A Page Out of a Life History.
"I was always a restless sort of fellow, with a strong desire to see as much of the world as possible, and had the means wherewith to gratify my desire. Once I was traveling in South America, and was in the interior of San Salvador during one of the perennial Latin-American uprisings or rebellions—at San Miguel, a fortified city. As the emette in question had started in one extremity of the republic, I thought it safe to linger a while in the quaint old Spanish town, as I was enamored of its quaint monastery, mission house, cathedral, and nursery."

"One day, while idling about the fortress a singular contrivance engaged my attention. Upon the plaza was a smooth-bore carondelet of ancient pattern, above the breech of which was suspended a lens in such manner that at noon the sun's rays were focused at the nipple, automatically firing the gun which indicated that midday had arrived and the time of the siesta was at hand."

"I stood idly by as noon approached to note the explosion in a sort of reverie. I remembered afterward that a cuckoo clock in the commandant's house had by struck the hour full fifteen minutes before the proper time, and the deep-toned church bell tolled its maximum of strokes at least five minutes before the sun reached the true meridian."

Warning of Noonday.

"At last the sun reached the zenith, and the ancient piece belched its warning, the hills about the town catching up the sound, the report reverberating for a full minute before the echoes suddenly died away in the distance. "I wandered away and about the city idly and carelessly. I was quartered at

what we would call a tavern, which was that night the scene of much commotion. I could not understand. In the morning I was told that the revolutionists, under General di Garcia, were in the hills across the valley from the town and that a battle was imminent.

"Not caring to risk my safety in a quarrel in which I had no earthly concern, I packed my valise and endeavored to leave San Miguel, but was arrested while leaving my hotel and carried before the commandant, a brigandish-looking fellow named Salvaie, charged with being a revolutionary spy. Here was a predicament, I thought, but concluded that at its worst it was but a temporary inconvenience in the way of detention, and so was inclined to treat the matter as something of a joke to be laughed over in the future."

"Judge of my dismay when I was told that I was to be tried by drumhead court-martial within the hour, and as a precautionary measure I would be sent for a priest and make my peace with God!"

Unavailing Protestations.

"In vain I declared my American citizenship; in vain I sought to have produced my properly valid passport; in vain I pleaded for delay until the minister resident could be communicated with. No protestation availed, and I seriously thought of the future. The day before I was arrested of life—careless of death. But this rapidly changing danger convinced me that life held much of pleasure in store for me even yet, if I could but escape the clutches of these semi-barbarians."

"Vigilantly protesting against the summary proceedings, I was taken by a file of soldiers and placed in a dungeon, whence I emerged in an hour or so, heavily manacled and guarded by another phalanx of military nondescripts."

"Seven men tried me for the crime with which I stood charged, and with less deliberation than an American police judge would accord a 'drunk.' I was sentenced to be blown from the muzzle of San Miguel's noonday gun when it should next explode, the judge advocate grimly informing me that I

would most probably have the pleasure of witnessing 'my fellow-traitors' receiving their just deserts in battle while awaiting the dreadful hour."

Chained to the Cannon.

"I was conveyed from the barracks to the plaza, and tightly chained, with my back pressing the muzzle of the gun. Behind me, across the valley, I could see the revolutionists being marshaled for the fight, their gaudy uniforms and trappings forming a picture almost of splendor as the hurrying sun silhouetted them against the trees in front of which they were grouped."

"At my side stood a padre, chanting the prayers of the holy church, beseeching me to confess my sins and be shriven. About were groups of the soldiers who were to sustain the attack when delivered, which was manifestly to come up from the slope directly in front of me. It was a panorama to me never to be forgotten, and I have never been able to analyze my thoughts as I stood there with cruel, mangleing death behind me, watching the shadows of men and things shorten as the sun swept up from the east behind me."

"The cuckoo clock in the commandant's house sounded the hour of 10; the church bells took up the sounding a few minutes later, and still the attack, my only source of hope, was delayed. "I ran the gamut of the emotions, at one moment being overcome with fear, the next lapsing into the indifference of the condemned. I hoped the entire battle would be fought within the range of my vision. In the clear atmosphere I could see that a council of war was being held in the camp, or rather halting spot, about a mile away. I could even distinguish the commanding officer, I thought, and imagined that he was consulting vehemently while addressing his handful of troops, which I guessed numbered about 750."

Searching for a Cloud.

"And still they delayed. I lazily scanned the horizon as far as I could see to find a vagrant cloud or two which might come up and intercept the sun's rays at the crucial moment, meantime wondering what disposal my captors would make of me in such an event."

thought of home, of Washington, and remembered that I even wondered if ever it were possible to distinguish troops on the Avenue from the Capitol to the Treasury Department as clearly as I could see the hesitating troops—about an equal distance away."

"I remembered the stories I had read in my youth of the Sepoy rebellion in India, and of the fate of so many of Sant Sahib's men—that was to be my fate soon, blown from the cannon's mouth. I contrasted their feelings with mine—to my disadvantage, for whereas they died imbued with the belief that they were to be forthwith translated to the seventh heaven, reserved for those that die in defense of the faith, I could only speculate about the future. I was dying a causeless death, for a crime of which I was innocent, away from home, from friends, from native land."

"From the church off to my right I could hear the monks chanting a prayer, and then the wailing grandeur of the mass, enabled now and again to catch a Latin phrase or two. I wondered how these women of God looked, grouped about the altar of the old Spanish church, in which, I remembered, were pictures of rare worth and obvious great value—the Stations of the Cross—and altar fixtures of which had excited my admiration and aroused in me a feeling of covetousness which I now disclaimed."

Measuring the Minutes.

"And still the dullards in the valley below delayed an advance. I counted a hundred, guessing that by the time I had methodically done so the hour of 11 would strike."

"I gauged it about right, for the clear tones of the 'cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo' of the commandant's clock could be heard ere I had reached ninety-five. What an interminable time, it seem to me, elapsed between the cuckoo sounding and the church bell's stroke. And what a different note it sounded when it did peal forth! It seemed as though I were in the bell tower, and the mellow tone of the chime had been harshened into a clanging discord had taken its place. "Eleven o'clock! Sixty minutes more of life!"

At this juncture the attitude of the tall, gaunt man changed, as did the tones of his voice and his very expression. Thrilled as I was by the story, I was startled at the transformation. The low monotone changed to one of dramatic expression. He ceased addressing me and seemed to speak to those I had quickened memory had wrought into living sentient beings. "Pools! Pools! You in the valley below," he broke forth. "Do you not know that I am here chained, Tantalus-like, dependent upon your activity to save me from a most cruel, most unjust death!"

"Oh, how that gun's muzzle presses against my back. Charge, charge, you cowards, and set me free!"

"The sun is mounting higher, higher. No welcome cloud to shield me from my fate. The shadows shorten, shorten! My nodding head reflected upon the ground seems eager to kiss my feet."

The Engagement Opens.

"A movement in the valley. A shot. An advance. A cannon behind me belches forth; its sound unnerves me completely, and I shudder and weep. My fortitude is leaving me, but I thank God the miscreants who have wrought my undoing have others to engage their attention, and so do not note my grief."

"The revolutionists are moving up on the run. I hear hoarse orders. A clattering of accoutrements marks their nearer approach, but now they are lost to my sight in the steep below the plaza. The fire slackens. Have they retreated? Are they beaten off?"

"Not yet, not yet! I hear them more distinctly. A sudden movement of a company near me attracts my attention. Ah, they are on the plaza and shooting right toward me!"

"The minutes fly. Above the clamor of the battle I hear the cuckoo. Fifteen minutes more. The padre gives me his blessing and seeks the shelter of the mission house. The bell in the church tower clangs its discordant, previous peal. Seconds now, seconds! Bullets rattle about me. I tug at my chains, but their cruel links bind me tightly to my fate."

"I can stand no more. The limits of human endurance have been reached. I faint. The waves of the sea of oblivion engulf me."

"Sueñito, hermano; agita! Pronto! (Brother, loose him; water, quick!) I hear, as in a dream, a voice say. I struggle to collect my faculties. I am borne off a distance in the shade, and am tenderly laid on the grass. Water is thrown in my face, and I breathe more freely, although my head is yet in a whirl."

"Brother," says the same voice, "wake up; we have saved you. I shot the sun glass off myself, and you were between the two fires for an hour, but you were unconscious."

Eclipse of the Hero.

His animation ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and the tall, gaunt man gazed moodily into space, his arms outstretched over the arms of the chair, his hands the while beating a nervous tattoo. The recital of his terrible experience had stirred me as I am seldom stirred, and I was at a loss how to thank him.

A moment or two elapsed, and two men entered the lobby, gave the room a comprehensive sweep with their eyes. One was as tall as my companion, with a breadth of shoulders befitting an athlete, the other small, but professional-looking, with a keen gray eye, a broad square jaw, and the power of initiation apparent in his every look and gesture. The latter let his glance fall upon my companion, touched the arm of the one who accompanied him, and both strode hastily to where we sat, each seizing an arm of my hero of San Miguel.

"Come, Joe," said the professional-looking man, "no scenes now; we've concluded to give you back your command if you will go quietly with us."

My companion had escaped from St. Elizabeth's. He had been a naval cadet, was stricken by the sun when about to graduate, and had never been out of the country in his life, save on the customary cruises of the cadets. He had never put foot on the shores of South America.

ANTIQUATED LANDMARK RECENTLY DESTROYED BY FLAMES

Made to give way to the march of events and in the order of keeping step in the progressive era that is shedding its influences over every section of the District of Columbia, a little old log building that existed long before the coming of the last century and which, with some improvements made during the early part of that century, had its manifold, was recently destroyed. The little old structure was at one time the property of a gentleman named Garden, and was located on the Eastern Branch of the Potomac, on the road by which the British forces came on their invading march to Washington after the defeat of the American forces, under General Winder, at Bladensburg, in August, 1814.

The house is said to have had a history full of interest, but beyond the fact that it was the habitation of an

old man who had a ferry line across the river, no one seems to know about that history. It was near the bridge over the river at its lower part, and as there is no evil that does not redound to somebody's welfare, the old boatman who was sheltered by its log walls found his business more profitable when the red coats fired the bridge than it had ever been before. Still it was a landmark even if there was nothing to excite any wonder about its antique appearance.

The little old structure did serve to call attention to the triumphant march of General Ross' soldiers, as they rushed, flushed with victory, upon the Capital, though in none of the authoritative histories of the siege and short-lived capture of the town does it bear mention. It must have had its ups and downs, as all antiquated structures have, but they have been forgotten. It calls

attention, though, to some of the accounts of the invasion and capture of Washington as related by Major John L. Williams, of the Columbian Brigade, in the war of 1812. The enemy had possession of this city for a single day only. In that time they wantonly destroyed the public edifices having no relation in their structures to operations of war. "nor used at that time," as Major Williams recalled, "for military annoyance." Some of these edifices were costly monuments of taste and of the arts, and other depositories of the public archives, "not only precious to the nation as the memorials of its origins and early transactions, but interesting to all nations as instructions of the general stock of historical instruction and political science."

On the road from Bladensburg to Washington, while several edifices were burned by the British, the little log

cabin of the Eastern branch ferryman was passed by. The enemy swarmed all around it, but molested neither the house nor the boatman, and so it stood with some improvement as to size until within a few days ago, and those who knew it as they passed it on the roads then will know it now no more forever.

English soldiers did burn the house of Mr. Robert Sewall, from behind which a gun was fired at General Ross and killed the horse upon which he was mounted. The houses built for General Washington on the brow of Capitol Hill were put to the torch, as well as the large hotel belonging to Daniel Carroll, at Duddington, and others, and the ropewalks of Teach, Ringgold, Teach, & Co. and of John Chambers.

What the enemy did do when they crossed the Eastern Branch into the

Capital, however, was enough. They first destroyed the bridge but this was of no particular value, for the river was then at many points entirely fordable. All histories—at least all American histories—contained graphic accounts of their vandalism. They burned the President's house and forced President Madison to take a hasty departure, leaving a richly equipped dinner table with all its epicurean contents undisturbed. In that one day's possession of the city they accomplished a great deal of downright vandalism. They burned "the Treasury Office" and set fire to the Capitol and claimed in their official reports to have destroyed the old navy yard, but the commandant, Captain Tingey, outwitted them and burned the station himself to prevent it from falling into the hands of Admiral Cockburn, who had

command of the English naval forces.

The office of the "National Intelligence" was then on Pennsylvania Avenue, which was the only business street, or rather road—it could hardly have been called a street—in the city. The paper exasperated the ire of Admiral Cockburn because of the fact that one of its editors, Mr. Joseph Gales, was an Englishman by birth and strenuously upheld the American cause and bitterly denounced the English government. The British did not burn the office because of the entreaties of several women of contiguous buildings which would have been destroyed with the office buildings. Cockburn had all the volumes of the paper's library thrown into the street and burned; all the type and printing office material were thrown out of the windows and all the presses were broken to pieces.

These acts of vandalism were not entirely appreciated by the people in London and there was much comment upon them. The "London Statesman" compared the doings of Ross and Cockburn with the conduct of buccanniers and filibusters of old, and the "British Annual Register" for 1814 denounced their proceedings as a return to the time of barbarism.

All this is history, but the little old Garden house, then the abode of the old ferry pilot, and which was razed the other day, was in the vandals' power, but spared probably because, like many other edifices of those primitive times in the nation's history, it was too insignificant. Its prestige, if it had any of any great interest, and its traditions, if any surrounded it, have passed away with those who in the greater part of its days of usefulness upon earth knew

SOME TERSELY TOLD FACTS

A cubic foot of new fallen snow weighs 5½ pounds on the average, and has twelve times the bulk of an equal weight of water.

There are 10,000 heat units in a pound of average coal, a chunk as big as a man's fist, which, if properly expended, will give a fraction over 230 horsepower. The trouble is that we have not yet devised the means of extracting its fullest power. That pound of coal will do as much work—always if properly expended—as 100 men, putting forth their mightiest effort, for four minutes.

Our average man wears out nearly two inches of shoe leather in a year. Some cranks has estimated that if a man had shoes made to last him a lifetime they would have to have soles nearly nine feet thick.

A perfectly proportioned man should weigh twenty-eight pounds for every foot of his height.

The Kaiser puts in twelve hours of work a day; he knows something about engineering and electricity, he can paint a picture and make a caricature, he can cook as well as eat, he leads in prayer and conducts a choir. He changes his dress twelve times a day, has a dozen twelve and \$600 worth of clothes, he bears 100 titles and is an admiral in three of the biggest navies; he does 100 different things, and does each one pretty nearly as well as does an expert in that particular line, certainly a royal jack of all trades.

The first play given in France was "Cleopatra," in 1552.

The first public library in modern Europe was founded in Florence in the fifteenth century.

At Rotterdam poor people who cannot afford to pay a fee are married on Wednesday before noon. Query: If the swell Wednesday weddings in New York at "high noon" are solemnized at that particular time for the same reason?

Brick dust mortar is often used as a substitute for hydraulic cement; anything made of burnt clay is bound to be good for building purposes.

There are 512,585 manufacturing establishments in the United States (not including shops producing less than \$500 worth a year, or governmental, penal

or educational institutions) an increase of 44 per cent in the last ten years; the capital of these establishments is \$10,000,000,000, an increase of 51 per cent; 5,312,000 wage-earners, an increase of 25 per cent; \$2,235,500,000 in wages, increase 23 per cent; \$1,020,000,000 miscellaneous expenses, increase of 63 per cent; \$7,550,000,000 cost of materials, increase 42 per cent; \$12,019,552,000 value of products, increase of 39 per cent.

Buenos Ayres has the largest opera house in the world.

There are 124 establishments for the manufacture of starch in the United States with a capital of \$11,672,000 invested. They make 300,000,000 pounds of starch a year, two-thirds of which is made from Indian corn.

Russia suffers terribly from forest fires. It is not unusual for fire to clean out 250,000 acres of forest per year.

The cow tree of Venezuela gives off a most excellent sap very closely resembling animal milk in its chemical nature.

India has nearly 20,000,000 acres in rice, 18,000,000 in wheat, 75,000,000 in other food grains, 1,000,000 in sugar cane, 250,000 in tea, 10,000,000 in cotton, 1,000,000 in indigo, and 200,000 in tobacco.

Three-fourths of the earth's surface is unfit for cultivation on account of mountain ranges, deserts, swamps and barren grounds.

Florida produces fifty-six varieties of oranges and has a crop of from 4,000,000 to 7,000,000 boxes a year.

It is estimated that 6,500 square miles, or nearly one-fifth of the total area of Indiana, is most excellent coal land, with the beds not lying over eighty feet below the surface.

The French Academy was founded by Richelieu in 1635, was abolished in 1793, revived and made a useful body by Napoleon in 1803. Membership to it is the highest literary honor in the world. The members receive a salary of \$300,000 a year and a fee of \$3.57 for every meeting they attend.

One of the largest books made in recent years is that one owned by the King of England. It is eighteen inches thick, and weighs sixty-three pounds,

and contains the addresses of congratulation on the occasion of his mother's jubilee.

Wyoming is richer in minerals than any other State in the Union.

This country produces over 12,000,000,000 eggs per year.

By dipping eggs in a solution of gun-lac dissolved in alcohol a Frenchman has kept eggs for two years, and then had them hatched successfully.

Japan produces 100,000,000 pounds of cotton per year, while we produce 80 per cent of the entire world's crop. We also produce 40 per cent of its steel and other mineral products, 23 per cent of its coal, 30 per cent of its iron and grain, and 25 per cent of its wheat.

We indulge in one milch cow to every four of our inhabitants in this country.

China raises and consumes more ducks than any other country in the world.

The largest rose bush is in Mobile, Ala. Five feet above the ground its trunk is over a foot in circumference.

Last year there were 23,000 socialist votes in Massachusetts, and they elected three assemblymen; at this last election there were but 25,000 such votes, and only one assemblyman elected. One hundred thousand voters failed to perform their civic duties at this last election, and 40,000 of these were not even registered.

New Zealand pays out \$1,000,000 in old age pensions. A person must be fifty-six years old, a resident for twenty-five years, a clean record—that is, never has been convicted of crime—and his yearly income must not exceed \$250, and he must be about equal, then the women begin to grow less with great rapidity. At thirty, there are 75,000 more men than women, and at forty, 83,000.

Ambergris is worth \$30 an ounce.

Two-thirds of the gold now in use in the world was discovered during the last fifty years.

FAT MAN AND ELEVATOR

A CERTAIN Washington business man of extensive girth, who is always in a hurry, came in blowing the other day to the ground floor of the well of a downtown elevator. He noticed with impatience that the car was not in sight. Upon coming up closer to the iron grating he saw that the drop-car was moving in a way to indicate the approach of the time-saving lift. As he turned away he caught sight of a man in the hallway, who was taking charge of a battery, a coil or two of wire, and a few other appliances of the practical electrician. Suddenly a distressing thought came to the fat business man.

"Anything the matter with the elevator?" he asked in alarm. "Is it running?"

"Oh, yes, it's running," the electrician cheerfully replied with a glance toward the questioner, which took in that part of his rotund body where his waist seemed to be. "It's running if you wish to risk it. It's condemned."

Now this business man of 243 pounds is noted for his conservatism. He never goes into anything—and this general policy of his applies especially to an elevator—unless he is convinced beforehand that it is safe. So, when mingled feelings of thankfulness that he had been warned in time to save risk his life, and of sorrow over the prospect of walking up six long flights of stairs, he began his pushing climb. Upon every one of the floors he came to, he saw the elevator going either up or down well supplied with passengers, and each time that he caught a glimpse of the dangerous car he complimented himself upon his carefulness, and was ready to start a fearful crash at the bottom of the well. Upon the top floor, where he was to transact his business, the head of the firm anxiously inquired if he were suffering from heart disease, and led him to a chair.

When at length the newcomer recovered from his shock, he explained the cause of his trouble.

"Why," burst out the head of the firm, turning his face from view, "that electrician's the biggest Joe-joker in town. That elevator's all right."

FRANCE IMITATES AMERICA.

"Le Journal" (Paris) deplores the fact that French commerce is slowly losing its markets, not only in the basin of the Mediterranean, where it once was virtually without competitors, but in Asia and the new world. The article, by calling attention to the example of the Americans, who have suggested a floating exposition to exhibit their merchandise in Pacific ports, and states that M. Louis Olivier, secretary of the Revue Generale des Sciences, Paris, has taken advantage of this idea by equipping a steamer as a floating museum, which will visit the important commercial centers of the Levant.

GREAT MEN'S WOOINGS

THAT there is no accounting for the eccentricities of lovers is sufficiently proved by the odd methods in which many of the world's great men have wooed and won their wives.

When Schumann, the famous composer, fell head over heels in love with Clara Wieck, his master's daughter, his path of courtship was by no means one of roses, for Herr Wieck had no wish to see his only daughter the wife of a penniless musician, and he forbade the young lovers to hold any communication with each other. But love laughs at parental frowns, and, as Schumann could not even write to his lady love, he poured out his soul to her in a series of "Letters to Clara," printed in a musical journal of which he was editor. When the time was ripe for settling his destiny he made music the vehicle of his passion, and actually proposed to Clara on the piano under the very nose of her father, without a single word of being uttered, and received her joyful assent through the same medium.

Edison's method of wooing was no less eccentric. One day he strolled into one of his workrooms and stood behind the chair of a pretty operator, who was absorbed in her work. When the girl glanced round, and looking shyly up at him, said: "I knew it was you, Mr. Edison; I always know when you are near," he answered, to her amazement, "I've been thinking a great deal about you lately, and if you are willing to marry me, I would like to marry you." A month later the pretty employee was promoted to a "partnership," which she has never regretted.

Sophron won his wife with equally dramatic suddenness. After playing a duet at a court concert with Dorette Scheidler, a beautiful and gifted harpist, and while the tumult of applause was still ringing in their ears, he said to his companion, "Shall we play together through life?" For answer "the lady burst into tears and sank into his arms."

One day when Dr. Dawson, an eloquent preacher of a century ago, called to see Miss Corbett, a wealthy admirer of his oratory, for whom he had conceived a not altogether platonic affection, he found her reading the Bible. Stealing up behind her he looked over her shoulder to see what she was reading, when, without showing any recognition of his presence, the lady's fore-

finger rested on the words of Nathan to David: "Thou art the man." Even a less marked hint would have been sufficient for Dr. Dawson, and we cannot wonder that Miss Corbett soon changed her name.

Dr. Abernathy, the famous physician, was as abrupt in his courtship as in his treatment of his patients. When, after a single meeting, he decided that Miss Anna Threiffall would make a desirable life partner, he promptly wrote to tell her so in a direct, businesslike way. He told her frankly that he was "much too busy a man to have time to spare for love-making," but if she was willing to marry him she might let him know. The answer was favorable.

Gainsborough's wooing was made all the more absurdly easy for him. He had completed a portrait of Miss Burr, a charming young lady of sixteen summers, when his fair sitter was so delighted with her presentation that she more than hinted that while she took the copy the artist might claim the original. Gainsborough did not decline such a tempting offer.

For constancy it would be difficult to find a rival for Jeremy Bentham. In early manhood Jeremy Bentham proposed for the hand of a young lady, who promptly refused him. Forty years later he renewed his offer with the same result, and, still loyally cherishing his love in old age, he proposed again at the age of eighty in a touching letter, in which he wrote: "Since the day when you presented me with the flower in the lane, not a single day has passed in which you have not engrossed my thoughts."

Probably no gallant who ever laid his heart at a fair lady's feet was more undecided than Lord Byron, when he wrote the letter which committed him to his unhappy marriage with Miss Milbank. He had just proposed to another lady, and as he held her letter of refusal in his hand he said to a friend: "It seems that it is to be Miss Milbank after all; I will write to her."

He sat down and wrote the "fatal letter," handing it to his friend for perusal. "A very pretty letter," the friend remarked, after reading it. "It is a pity that it shouldn't go."

"Then it shall go!" exclaimed Byron; and the opening of the most tragic chapters of his checked life-story. Grave political crises always engendered danger for their principal figures. Unknown to the public our foremost states-